

My name is Arlo Skari

I and my family farm 10 miles south of the Sweetgrass Hills, the world's most sacred and beautiful mountains.

EXHIBIT 15

DATE 3/23/11

SB 306

There are so many dangerous bills in this legislative session that one has difficulty picking the worst. One of the most dangerous is SB 306-Murphy-Cardwell which will allow any mine to process it's ore at any existing grandfathered mine (Golden Sunlight at Whitehall) that can use cyanide leach processing; this effectively negates I-137, a voter passed initiative in 1998 which outlawed this type of mining. Then in 2004, an industry sponsored action, I-147, which called for repeal of I-137, was defeated by voters by an even greater margin. So now the legislature is ignoring that as if the voters didn't know what they were doing.

SB 306 should be voted down by both Liberals and **Conservatives** as it restores the mandate of the General Mining Law of 1872 which states that mining has priority over all other industries and users including agriculture, outdoor recreationists, municipalities and wildlife including human beings who just like to live and work there. But 1872 was during the period of high grade ore mining and heap leach cyanide was not heard of.

Now, instead of calling it mining, it is basically mountain removal with It's resultant poisoned water, wildlife destruction, loss of grazing, long term loss of jobs and no longer a beautiful, sacred mountain to look at. And for what, **gold** which is basically used for jewelry.

Montanans surrounding the Sweetgrass Hills area should feel very threatened because of SB 306.

Three major rural water systems in Liberty, Hill and Toole counties source their water in the "Hills". stretching 200 to 300 miles.

Many local and statewide citizens organized and worked during the 1990s opposing the Lehmann financed mining venture on East Butte up until Rep. Pat Williams and Secretary Bruce Babbitt then imposed a 20 year moratorium on mineral entry which is soon to run out. Gold was then running at two to three hundred dollars an ounce.

With the passage of SB 306, it is conceivable, with gold prices at 1400 dollars/oz., to ship gold bearing ore from the "Hills" to Whitehall.

Cyanide leach gold mining is the most environmentally destructive of all resource extractions as it leaves a legacy of poisoned water which must be treated in perpetuity (Zortman-Landusky) Then there is the deeply scared mountain which is forever.

To date, the State has spent 65 million of taxpayer dollars on reclamation of these disastrous mining ventures.

Montanans, if you care about beautiful mountains and clean water, do everything you legally can to defeat SB 306 which may be asking the Governor to stamp his veto brand on SB 306.

Respectfully submitted before the 2011 Montana Legislature.

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